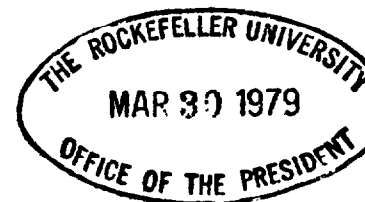


HARVARD UNIVERSITY  
THE BIOLOGICAL LABORATORIES



16 DIVINITY AVENUE  
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02138

March 28, 1979

Joshua Lederberg  
President  
Rockefeller University  
York Avenue E. 66th  
New York, New York 10021

Dear Joshua:

I enjoyed immensely your literate and insightful discussion on the current scene last Friday at Mt. Sinai. You said two things that rather surprised me. First, if I understood you correctly, you said that the radiation from Hiroshima and Nagasaki did not significantly affect the leukemia incidence, indicating how difficult it was to get direct evidence concerning the effect of mutagens-carcinogens on humans. The enclosed two pages from John Cairns' new book on cancer state the contrary, and in fact, make strong qualitative claims. I gather these conclusions are based on Rossi and Kellner (1974) *Radiat. Res.* 58, 131-140. Is there any reason to doubt these findings?

The second statement concerns the XY business. Here my information is completely anecdotal, but I had thought that a recent study, perhaps conducted in Denmark, indicated that the only unusual attribute of XY's was a slight tendency toward mental slowness - hence a greater tendency to be caught if criminal. If you have a moment to set me straight on these matters, I would appreciate it, but they are merely matters of curiosity and there is no urgency.

Sincerely,

MARK PTASHNE  
Professor of Biochemistry  
and Molecular Biology

MP:cjm

Enclosure

MUTAGENESIS  
NOT  
LEUKEMIA